

Empirical studies suggest that Ford's testimony could have been inaccurate even if she was fully convinced that the events occurred as she described them. In other words, she could have been telling the truth and nevertheless have accused Kavanaugh falsely. Polygraph experts have also identified this problem, pointing out that polygraphs can assess only a person's subjective belief.³⁶ If the subject of a polygraph test believes what he is saying to be true, the polygraph will rate him non-deceptive. This was illustrated by Blasey Ford's own testimony in the hearing, when she stated that details in the statement she read at the polygraph exam were in fact inaccurate. Because she apparently believed them to be true at the time, the test showed no deception.



The Kavanaugh team stuck to its policy of not attacking Ford personally even though damaging information about Ford was being openly discussed by people who knew her, some who knew her quite well. Classmates were surprised by the media's portrayal of her as an ingénue, which was very different from how they remembered her in junior high and high school. Female classmates and friends at area schools recalled a heavy drinker who was much more aggressive with boys than they were. "If she only had one beer" on the night of the alleged assault, a high school friend said, "then it must have been early in the evening." Her contemporaries all reported the same nickname for Ford, a riff on her maiden name and a sexual act. They also debated whether her behavior in high school could be attributed to the trauma of a sexual assault. If it could, one of them said, then the assault must have happened in seventh grade.

Although discussions along these lines were pervasive in the still-close Montgomery County community, none of these details was reported by the media, which were preoccupied with every emerging scrap of information about Kavanaugh's youth.

Investigators on the Senate Judiciary Committee received communications from two men who claimed to have had (consensual)

romantic encounters with the teenaged Christine Blasey. Each claimed consensual encounters with her that sounded similar to the assault she described. For instance, one man said that when he was a “19-year-old college student, he visited D.C. over spring break and kissed a girl he believes was Dr. Ford. He said that kiss happened in the bedroom of a house which was a 15- to 20-minute walk from the Van Ness Metro. Ford was wearing a swimsuit under her clothing, and the kissing ended when a friend jumped on them as a joke. [He] said that the woman initiated the kissing and that he did not force himself on her.”

Another person, claiming to be a college acquaintance of Ford’s, said that Ford used to purchase drugs from another student and regularly attended his fraternity parties. According to this witness, she enjoyed a robust social life in college. Other friends from college reported similar experiences and said Ford had never demonstrated fear of rooms with single entrances.

Contemporaries of Ford’s at Holton-Arms said the least believable part of her story was how she left the party. It was inconceivable to them that she would have left Leland Keyser behind and that Keyser would not have found her abandonment to be highly noteworthy. She had always filled a protective role for Ford, so it seemed quite unlikely that she would not have become worried and made sure her friend was well. The story of a fifteen-year-old tenth-grader leaving behind the only other female at a party and then finding her way home, miles away, in pre-cell-phone 1982, with no car, no metro, and no cabs readily available is difficult to believe.

Ford’s partying and interactions with boys and young men and the attention they drew had dismayed her family. Some journalists noticed that a letter from “members of Christine Blasey Ford’s family” did not include the signatures of any blood relatives. In a story headlined “Christine Blasey Ford’s Family Has Been Nearly Silent Amid Outpouring of Support,” the *Washington Post* took her parents and brothers to task for failing to sign her in-laws’ letter. Her father, Ralph Blasey, responded, “I think all of the Blasey family would support her. I think her record

stands for itself. Her schooling, her jobs and so on.” Later he added, “I think any father would have love for his daughter.”³⁷

The media tended to skim over Ford’s political views, which ran decidedly to the left and were at variance with most of her family’s. Facebook friends reported that she had regularly expressed her hostility to the Trump administration before she deleted her profile around the time of Kavanaugh’s nomination. After her retreat from social media, only a few references to her political opinions remained, one mentioning a hat she wore in homage to the anti-Trump “pussy hat” protesters, another protesting Trump’s policy on border security.³⁸

In one of the *Washington Post*’s deferential profiles of Ford, her husband had suggested that any strain in the family was due to those “differing political views” and misogyny: “It was a very male-dominated environment. Everyone was interested in what’s going on with the men, and the women are sidelined, and she didn’t get the attention or respect she felt she deserved.” The same article emphasized that Ford’s father and Kavanaugh’s father belonged to the same all-male golf club, Burning Tree.

The *Post* suggested that Ford’s family was afraid to defend her, quoting her sister-in-law as saying that supporters of sexual assault victims have trouble coming forward. Hale Boggs III, the scion of a prominent Democratic family and a friend of the Blaseys, remarked, “It’s got to be such a difficult situation for that family. It’s a very close-knit community where a lot of families know each other.”³⁹ Still, a number of persons close to the family reported that staying silent was actually the family’s way of supporting Christine.

It was not fear of showing support for Ford that kept others in the community quiet but the opposite. While many high school acquaintances of Ford’s revealed unflattering details about her behavior in high school—some of them truly salacious—the media’s hostility to Kavanaugh made them fear for their livelihood if their names were attached to the stories. Some worried that their children’s college applications would be affected. And some were reluctant to expose Ford to the kind of ferocious public